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FINAL REPORT

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Title: French Language
Proficiency at University
Entrance.

Div. VI

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- 1.1 Scope
1.2 Aim
1.3 Review of the literature
1.4 Choice of Tests
1.5 Description of Tests

FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AT UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE

A survey of bilingualism among freshmen at twenty-five English Canadian universities and colleges.

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2.2 Results
2.3 Analysis by dimension
 3.3.1 Nationality
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February 28, 1966.

L.P. Valiquet



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Résumé of the Report

The following summary provides the briefest of abstracts of the report. For a more detailed yet rapid overview the reader is referred to the key sections shown in brackets at the end of each paragraph.

The Project. Early in the 1964 Fall term, freshmen enrolled in first year French courses at twenty-five English Canadian universities were administered two objective French tests, one in reading and the other in listening. Candidates also completed a questionnaire on language background. The aim of the study was to measure the effectiveness of French instruction in Canadian schools. (Project Outline and Questionnaire - Appendix, page 81.)

The Test Results. The results in both tests were low compared to American fourth year high school norms. Only Ontario in reading and Quebec in listening bettered this standard. Even with American third year norms as the yardstick five provinces failed to qualify in reading and seven in listening. To determine the academic factors bearing on these results, conditions for the teaching of French were reviewed province by province. (Charts and tables of test results, pages 9-11. Results - page 12. Findings - page 42.)

Results of the Questionnaire. The following were among the social factors which appeared to be associated with high scores: French background of one or both parents, living in a French milieu, positive attitudes towards the study of French, and female study habits. The superiority of the girls was fairly marked in reading but very slight in listening. The advantages, if any, of education in larger centres did not emerge clearly, and there was insufficient evidence that younger people do better than older people with equal amounts of training. There was very little evidence of the "language bath", most candidates stating that they had had few contacts with French as a living language, either through teachers who taught in French, or through French friends or the use of French mass media. (Summary of Findings - page 73.)

Conclusion. The survey reveals that even on the relatively simple planes of reading and listening the teaching of French as a second language in Canada is not producing bilingual students. There can be little question that proficiency is even less adequate in the more difficult skills of speaking and writing. (Conclusion - page 78.)

Acknowledgment

The computer print out, the basic statistics and preliminary tables for this study were provided by Rubin Sirkis.

FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AT UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE

A survey of bilingualism among freshmen at twenty-five English Canadian universities and colleges.

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

1.1 Scope

In September-October 1964 a listening test and a silent reading test in French were administered to selected freshman students at twenty-five English language universities and colleges¹ across Canada. Candidates were also required to complete a questionnaire relating to their background and training in French and their attitudes towards the study of the language. Although the intention was to have as many candidates as possible write both tests, it was not always possible to do so. Hence discrepancies arose, with the final totals showing 8,044 candidates for the reading test but only 5,841 candidates for the listening test.

1.2 Aim

The purpose of the project was (a) to measure and compare the degree of proficiency in French attained by graduates of each of the ten provincial high school systems² and (b) to determine the influence of various factors, both academic and social, on achievement.

-
1. The participating universities are listed in Appendix "A".
 2. Actually nine, since almost no students from Prince Edward Island were included in the sample.

1.3 Nature of the Sample

The selection of the sample to be tested presented certain difficulties. Each province has its own curriculum with variations in the French programme from district to district, or even from school to school. Students may begin their study of French in the early years of primary school or as late as grade 10 or 11 of high school. Methods also differ, sometimes with the emphasis on oral-aural skills, but more often on varying amounts of reading, writing, grammar and translation. The audio-visual and other aids available may include mass media, language laboratories, courses on film, or none of these. Teachers' qualifications for the teaching of French may be those of a university graduate with an honours degree in modern languages, or they may be those of an uncertificated high school graduate teaching on a letter of permission. Finally, the student's contacts, if any, with French in the home and the community and his attitudes towards the language and the people who speak it may also be significant factors in determining his achievement.

It will be apparent that a random selection which took into account all of these factors would have to be very large indeed and hence prohibitively expensive to administer. For this reason it was decided to restrict the project to the testing of university freshmen enrolled in first year French courses, as soon as possible after the beginning of the 1964 fall term. In this way the results would reflect the

knowledge acquired under the elementary and high school programmes, rather than through university training. It was felt that although the students involved would not be a random sample, they would nevertheless form a roughly similar group - and a very important group - for purposes of comparison between the provinces.

It should be noted that in all provinces except Alberta and Saskatchewan the provincial samples included a number of students who had entered university at the junior matriculation level and others who had entered after senior matriculation. Further, although all of the students tested had enrolled in First Year French, they had not necessarily done so of their own choice. In most Canadian universities, but not all, one or two years of French is required for graduation, at least in some faculties.³ These factors, together with the different curriculum requirements between provinces, produced a sample which, though large, was far from uniform. The sample was also statistically inadequate for the following reasons:

- (a) It was not a random sample and hence did not represent all types of students from all types of schools.
- (b) It did not take into account the large numbers of first year students who had had French in high school but who were not enrolled in first year French.
- (c) It did not include the large number of students in each province who had completed high school French but had not entered university.

3. The Universities of Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick do not require a second language for graduation.

1.4 Choice of Tests

The tests selected for the survey were the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests. These tests were developed by the Modern Language Association of America, which received a grant of more than half a million dollars in 1960 from the U.S. Office of Education for the evaluation of language learning. The tests were designed to measure the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. For each test there are two forms: Form L.A. for the first or second year of language learning and Form M.A. for the third and fourth year levels.

The use of these tests seemed advisable for several reasons. Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J., a leading research organization, had cooperated in their preparation, and so there was reason to believe that they would be valid and reliable. There were also norms available for the United States, thus providing a standard of comparison. Lastly, the tests were not tied to the curriculum of any provincial system, and so would be fair for all.

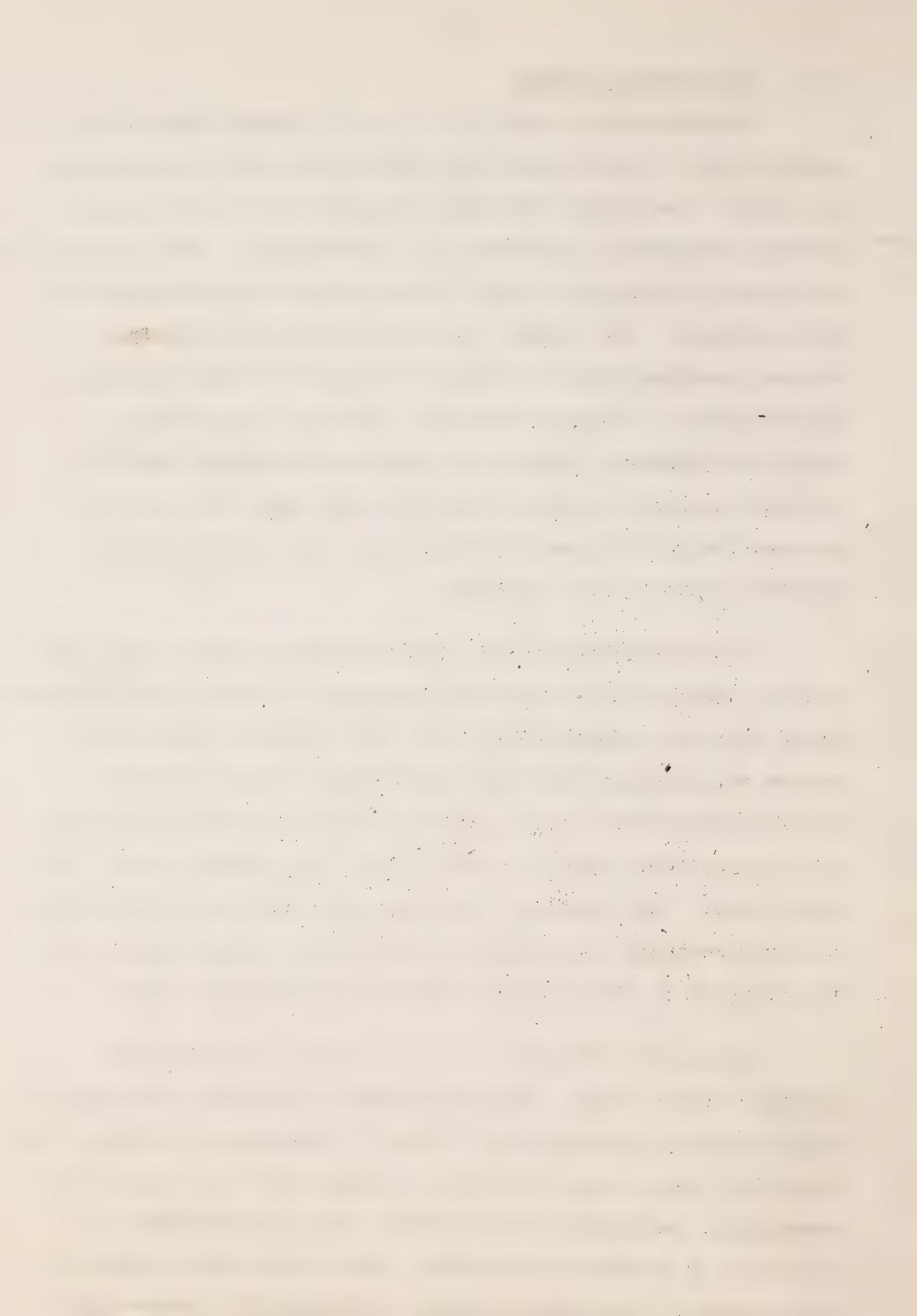
For a number of reasons it was decided to give only the listening and reading sections of the MLA tests. An important consideration here was that these two components could be scored objectively. The speaking and writing sections, on the other hand, contained subjective elements and hence could be marked only by experienced teachers. The advantages of using such subjective material did not seem commensurate with the budget which would have been required, and the length of the testing period would have been unduly increased.

1.5 Description of Tests

Listening Test - Form M.A. - is a 25 minute test of 40 spoken items. Instructions and stimulus material are presented on a tape to which all students taking the test listen either through headphones or by means of a loudspeaker. The instructions are given in English, and the stimulus materials and questions are in French. The student is required to answer multiple choice questions based on various recognition items including the following: a single utterance, two short utterances by different speakers, passages of connected discourse read by a single speaker, telephone conversations where the examinee assumes the part of one of the speakers, and dramatic scenes enacted by two to four speakers.

It is important to note that the voices heard on the tape are all those of native speakers speaking at normal conversational speed and with natural intonation. The stimulus material is spoken only once and both male and female voices are heard. The fact that there is no repetition makes the test a difficult one; the listener must be alert to hear and understand the very first time. This procedure contrasts with the type of listening test now becoming more general in provincial examinations, where the stimulus is almost always repeated two or three times.

Reading Test-Form M.A. is a 35-minute test of fifty multiple choice items. The first twenty items test knowledge of high frequency vocabulary and idioms in contextual settings. The remaining items consist of short reading selections taken from newspapers, periodicals and literary works, and followed by questions or incomplete statements which test comprehension of each passage. The student selects the appropriate answer and



marks its letter on an I.B.M. answer sheet. This test, too, is of more than average difficulty.

1.6 Questionnaire

Each candidate was asked to answer 23 questions relating to certain factors which might affect positively or negatively his achievement in French. The aim was to elicit information on the following points: country of birth, native language of each parent, and chief language spoken at home; self-estimate of speaking, reading, and writing ability in French; languages studied other than English or French; grades in which French was studied, whether instruction was given in French by native speakers, and whether use was made of a language laboratory; final mark obtained in last year of French and comparison of this mark with overall average in the same year; out of school contacts with the French language through French-speaking friends and/or through French radio, television, newspapers and magazines; attitudes towards French as revealed by the candidates' choices among various integrative and instrumental motives for studying the language.

1.7 Administration of Tests

In July 1964 letters were sent to the heads of French departments at English-Canadian universities asking them to undertake the administration of the tests and questionnaire. The students were to be examined in the first two weeks of the fall term. The Research Division of the Royal Commission was to provide tests and answer sheets and to arrange for the marking of the tests when the answer sheets were returned. The departments would be allowed to retain the test forms for their own use in the future. The response to this request was most encouraging,

with twenty-five institutions agreeing to administer the tests.

The testing took place on schedule and a generally good job was done. In some cases, however, there was evidence of administrative confusion and perhaps of a consequent loss of interest on the part of the students. Thus it was sometimes necessary to reschedule a test because of malfunction of the equipment or because of insufficient time to administer the two tests and complete the questionnaire in one continuous session. The result was that some students failed to turn up for the second session or filled in the questionnaire on their own in a slipshod manner.

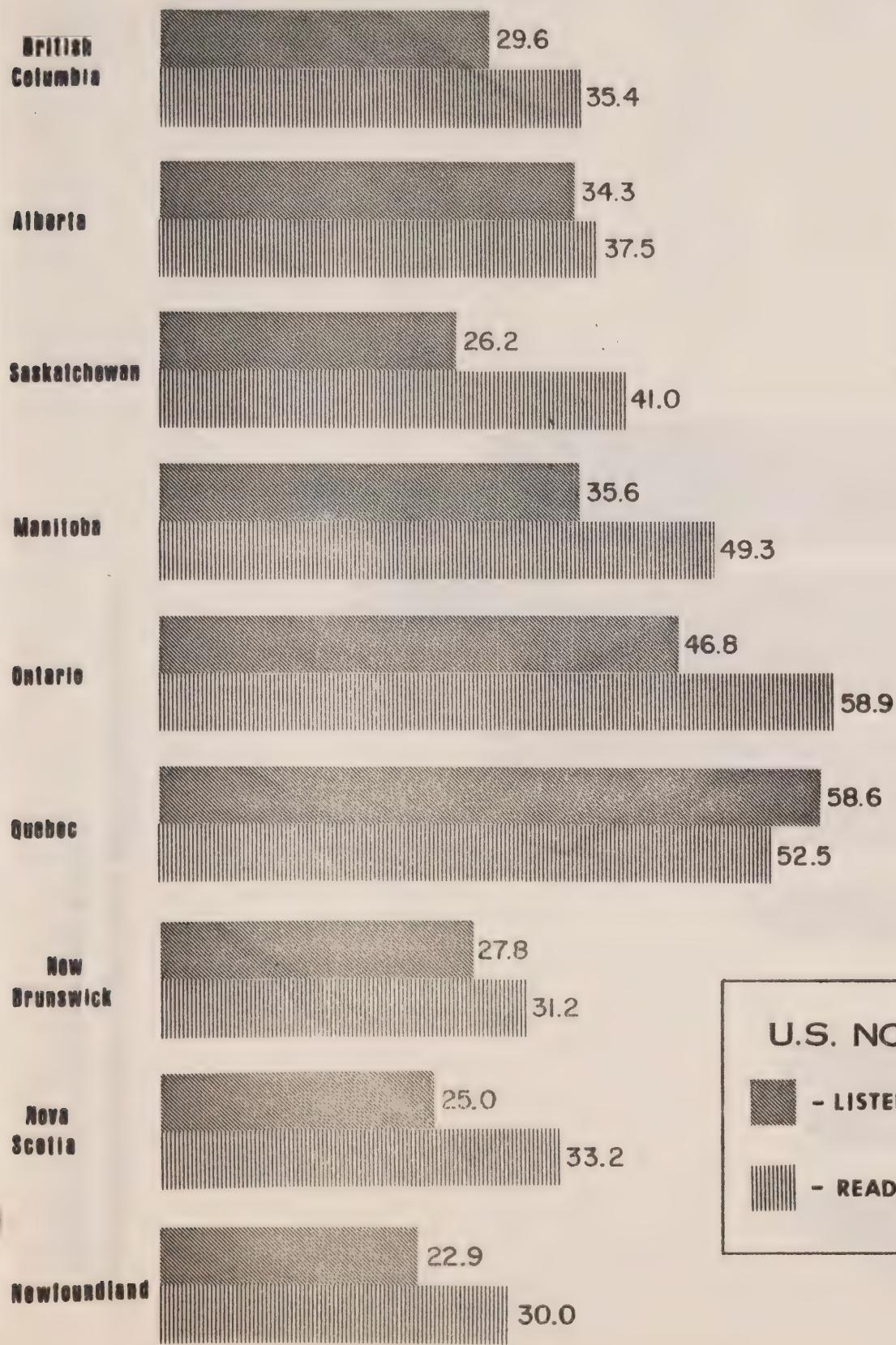
There is no doubt, too, that there were differences in the motivation of candidates which may have affected performance. The presence or lack of enthusiasm on the part of the faculty member serving as invigilator probably had an effect on student response. In some colleges the test was optional, in others voluntary. There may also have been some prejudice against a test sponsored by the Royal Commission. Some students, fearing perhaps that the test results would be used against them, chose to remain anonymous.

There were fewer candidates for the listening test than for the reading test. A partial explanation of this discrepancy was that the listening test required special equipment and was more trouble to arrange. If, for example, only small lecture rooms were available for the test and the number of candidates was large, it would be necessary to administer the test several times in order to test everybody. Nor would it be possible to

complete these separate administrations at the same time, since the number of tapes was limited. If, on the other hand, a large room were used, the problem arose of making the necessary arrangements for adequate amplification. Lastly, the fact that many students were unfamiliar with a listening test, and so would probably get poor scores, may also have contributed to the decision at some universities not to give this test.

Since the tests were administered after the summer holiday, a loss of retention may have affected the results to some extent. But the time lapse was the same for all. Further, the choice of place and time for the tests was dictated by the urgency of the project and the feasibility of obtaining uniformity of administration through the French departments of the participating universities.

• LISTENING AND READING TEST RESULTS
Percentage Scores by Provinces — Basic Group



U.S. NORMS - 4TH YEAR

[Hatched square] - LISTENING - 57.5%

[Vertical stripes] - READING - 54.0%

• READING AND LISTENING TEST RESULTS

Percentage of Candidates who Scored 50% or more on each test.

CHART II

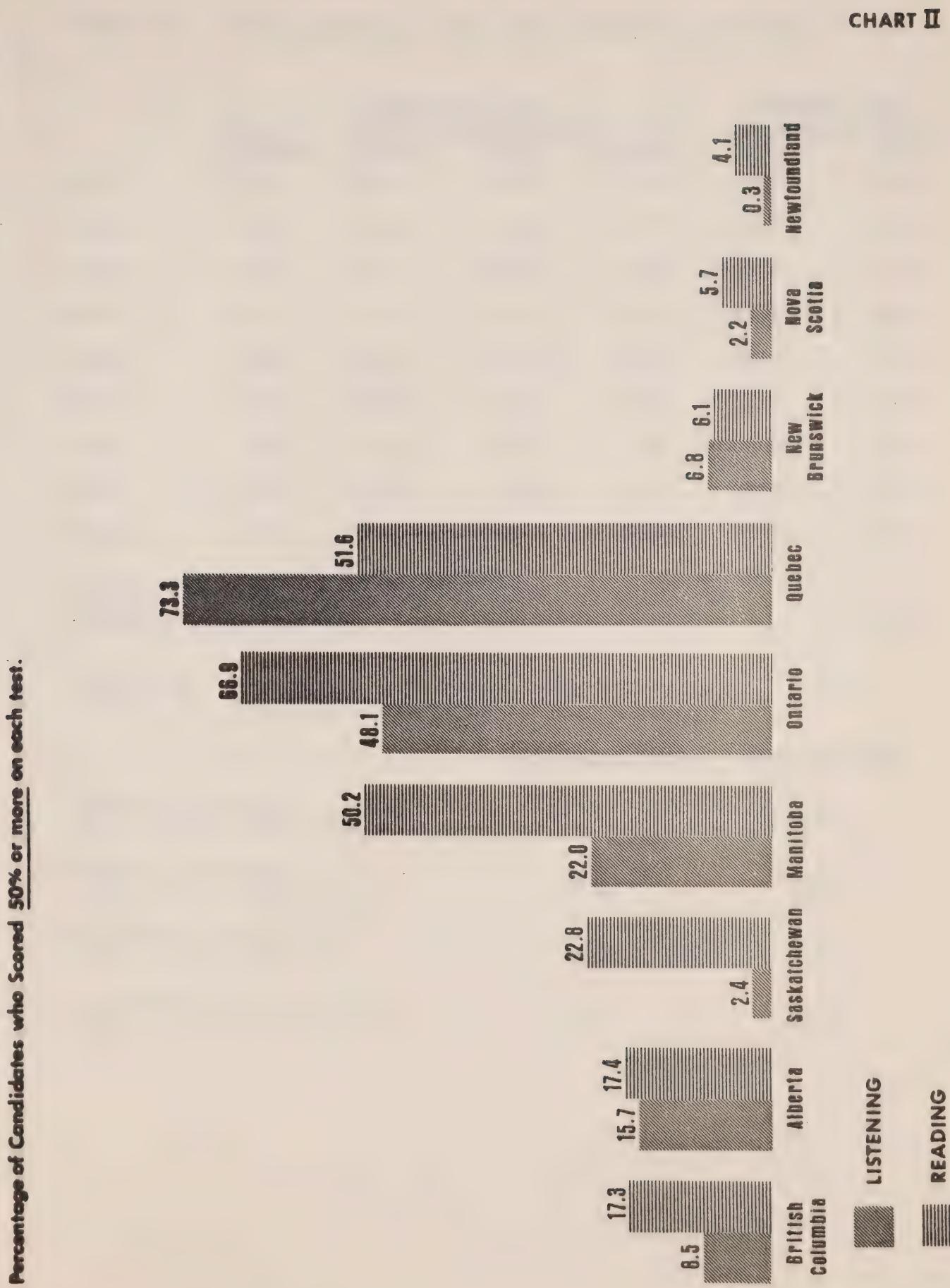


Table 2-A. Test results of the Basic Group by provinces.

	<u>No. of Students</u>	<u>Listening Test Scores</u>		<u>No. of Students</u>	<u>Reading Test Scores</u>	
		<u>Percentage Median</u>	<u>Mean.</u>		<u>Percentage Median</u>	<u>Mean.</u>
B.C.	664	27.5	29.6	755	33.6	35.4
Alta.	205	32.0	34.3	207	35.7	37.5
Sask.	384	25.5	26.2	460	39.8	41.0
Man.	271	32.6	35.6	293	50.1	49.3
Ont.	904	48.5	46.8	1497	58.5	58.9
Que.	255	59.9	58.6	552	51.1	52.5
N.B.	116	25.5	27.8	161	29.7	31.2
N.S.	223	24.4	25.0	231	32.9	33.2
Nfld.	306	23.0	22.9	413	29.0	30.0
Totals	3328			4569		
Averages			35.8			45.9

Table 2-B. Test results of Basic Group by regions.

	<u>Listening Test</u>	<u>Reading Test</u>
Western Provinces (B.C., Alta, Sask, Man.)	30.4	39.5
Central Provinces (Ontario & Quebec)	49.4	57.2
Maritime Provinces (N.B., N.S., Nfld.)	24.5	31.2
All Canada (Basic & Residual Groups)	38.7	47.8

2.1 Basic Group

As already stated, an important aim of the survey was to compare graduates of the ten provincial high school systems with respect to their proficiency in French. To ensure valid comparisons between the provinces, it was decided to restrict the sample to candidates who (a) had been born in Canada of English-speaking parents, (b) spoke English at home, and (c) had received their entire education within the bounds of a single province. This "Basic Group", as it was called, consisted of 4,579 candidates for the reading test and 3,337 candidates for the listening test. Unfortunately, the selection was not homogeneous with respect to years of training; and this fact, coupled with the further fact that the group was not a random sample, points to the need for extreme caution in the interpretation of results. Throughout the following discussion, unless otherwise stated, the facts and figures presented refer solely to the Basic Group.

2.2 Results

Chart I shows the mean percentage scores by provinces for both tests. In comparison with the United States norms for students who have completed four years of high school French - 57.5% for listening and 54.0% for reading - Canadian results were low. Only in Quebec (in the listening test) and in Ontario (in the reading test) were the American averages surpassed. Even if we go down to the American third year norms, which were 40% in each test, we find that seven provinces fell below this level in listening and that five of these also failed to achieve third

year standard in reading.

In Chart II the situation is presented more vividly by showing only the number of candidates in each province who approximated or surpassed the American norms by scoring 50% or better. The near zero percentages in the Maritimes immediately strike the eye, and the low scores in the Western provinces provide a measure of bilateral symmetry. The two Central provinces, aided by Manitoba (in reading only), provide the corps de logis of the structure.

Tables 2-A and 2-B provide further data relating to the results. In the former we see that in each province the median and mean scores for both tests are quite close together, indicating a fairly even spread of marks both above and below each provincial average. The national averages of 35.8 in listening and 45.9 in reading are, however, unduly weighted by the large number of candidates with relatively high scores in Ontario and Quebec.

Table 2-B attempts a regional comparison of results in both tests. The averages shown are quite meaningful for the Maritimes where the range of marks between provinces was narrow, but less meaningful for the Central and Western provinces where the range was greater. In the last line of the table it will be seen that when the Basic Group is combined with the remainder of the Canadian sample, the national average rises from 35.8 to 38.7 for listening and from 45.9 to 47.8 for reading.

A word will not be out of place here on the derivation of the American fourth year norms mentioned above. A full account of the standardization programme employed by Educational

Testing Service in the scaling, equating and norming of the MLA French tests is beyond the scope of this study.⁴ The following highlights must suffice:

- (a) The ETS project was based on a survey of a random sample of 2,000 high schools and 500 colleges drawn from a list of 23,537 secondary schools and 1715 colleges. 1210 schools (60.5%) and 425 colleges (85%) returned usable data.
- (b) The percentages of schools reporting third and fourth years of French instruction were substantially below those for introductory courses. In French 53% reported a first year course, 48% a second year course, 26% a third year course, and only 11% a fourth year course.
- (c) Of the 1210 schools mentioned in (a) a random selection was made for testing purposes by selecting every fifth school. Because this did not provide sufficient third and fourth year classes, additional schools were selected and the same procedure of random selection was used.
- (d) Score data for the reading and listening tests at the fourth year level are presented in Table 2-C.

Table 2-C. Statistical characteristics of MLA French tests - Form M.A. at fourth year high school level.

	N	M (raw scores)	SD (raw scores)	Reliability
Listening (40 items)	175	21.94	7.56	.868
Reading (50 items)	165	28.56	9.63	.896

4. Educational Testing Service publish a Handbook and also a Booklet of Norms which together provide a complete description of the tests.

Since most language courses are optional in American high schools, we may conclude that only able and highly motivated students elect to complete a four year sequence. This situation of a class of above average volunteers thirsting for knowledge contrasts sharply with most fourth year French classes in Canada. Here we find banded together the able and the unable, the willing and the unwilling, engaged in a common task imposed from above: the attainment of pass standing in matriculation French as a necessary prerequisite to university entrance. If this is the normal state of affairs, the disparity in test scores between our Canadian students and their American cousins is the less surprising.

One final remark regarding the tests. The reader will have noted the rather small number of cases on which the norms are based - 175 for listening and 165 for reading.

In summary, the test results, though not based on a representative sample, provide an indication that all is not well in Canadian language classrooms. Although all students tested had satisfied provincial requirements in French for university entrance, most of them appeared to have poor aural comprehension and poor reading ability as measured by the M.L.A. tests.

2.3 Analysis by Provinces

In seeking the causes of this unsatisfactory performance we shall examine the results of each province in turn in the light of information obtained from the candidates themselves and also from other sources. For this purpose a province by province survey of second language teaching recently completed

for the Royal Commission by Lionel Orlikow will be especially useful. The analysis will be confined mainly to the academic factors affecting achievement. Attitudinal and other social considerations will be dealt with in the following section of the report.

2.3.1 Newfoundland

Newfoundland provided a large sample of students, with over 300 taking the listening test and more than 400 the reading test. The results on both tests were the lowest in Canada (reading 30.0; listening 22.9).

In explanation of these low scores the following facts are pertinent:

- (a) Memorial University requires only three years of high school French for admission, and over half of the candidates had the bare minimum requirement. The remainder of the students were chiefly at the four year level. Since Memorial requires one year's study of a second language for graduation, we can be quite sure that not all of the candidates enrolled in first year French were there on a voluntary basis.
- (b) The 1964 matriculation examination placed heavy emphasis on translation - fully 80% of the paper. An optional dictation worth 10% was chosen by only a tenth of the candidates.
- (c) With reference to the staff engaged in the teaching of French in Newfoundland, Orlikow makes the following points.⁵ There are few French-speaking teachers. Very

5. Orlikow, L. Report on Second Language Teaching in the Public Schools of Newfoundland.

few people major in French at the university and only a handful of these go into teaching. French specialists are rare; most teachers teach two or more subjects in addition to French. In-service training is virtually unknown, and there are no modern language supervisors either at the local or the departmental levels.

- (d) One Newfoundland educator (who shall be nameless!) sums up the situation as follows:

"Generally the standard of teaching of French as a living language in Newfoundland is appallingly bad. Most teachers are still spelling out the words instead of pronouncing them. That means that most first year students at Memorial, apart from not being able to speak French, are also unable to hear French properly, and are unable to take advantage of the language laboratory and oral teaching."

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Newfoundland candidates scored low marks on the MLA tests.

2.3.2. Prince Edward Island

Although no university in this province participated in the project, some ten students educated in P.E.I. and enrolled in universities on the mainland were among the candidates tested. Their results were very low.

From the evidence available,⁶ there is little reason to believe that the state of second language teaching in Prince Edward Island differs materially from the situation in Newfoundland. The 1963 Grade 12 French examination prepared by the Atlantic Provinces Examining Board shows a similar preponderance of translation. Grave deficiencies exist in the teaching force available. Only one teacher in ten has a bachelor's degree plus teacher training, and one out of three has not completed high school plus teacher training.⁷ Lack of specialists, lack of supervision and training, lack of interest in conversational French⁸ - all these factors affect adversely second language teaching in Prince Edward Island as they do in Newfoundland.

2.3.3 Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia group of some 225 candidates obtained an average of 25% on the listening test and 33.2% on the reading test. The group was about equally divided between students with five years of training and those with six years.

Curiously enough, only 7% of the Nova Scotia students reported that they had made over 30% in French in their matriculation year. This 7% figure was considerably lower than that for the other provinces, which were usually between 20 and 30 per cent. Further, only 4% reported that they did better in French than in other subjects, and 67% stated that they did worse. We may conclude that French is considered a

-
6. Orlikow, L. Report on Second Language Teaching in the Prince Edward Island Public Schools.
 7. Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Prince Edward Island, 1964 p. 22.
 8. See Orlikow, op. cit., for a detailed account of these deficiencies.

difficult subject in Nova Scotia.

The 1963 Grade 12 French examination reveals the same strong emphasis on translation (about 70%) noted previously. There was a listening test, however, counting for 20% of the paper. In addition to a dictation, this test consisted of (a) an anecdote followed by five true-false statements and (b) five items requiring discrimination between three similar - sounding expressions; e.g., nous avons, nous savons, nous savions.

The use of an aural comprehension test indicates that Nova Scotia is trying to update its second language teaching methods. Many of the junior high schools have begun using audio-visual materials, including Voix et Images de France and the Encyclopedia Britannica film course, Je parle français. There is a good deal of open debate on language training aims and methods as shown by the reports and activities of the Modern and Classical Language Teachers Association. But membership in this organization includes only a relatively small number of the province's language teachers.

Moreover, an acute teacher shortage exists in Nova Scotia in all subjects. The situation is so critical that in many rural posts "any applicant is hired."⁹ According to Orlikow, "A considerable number of new teachers are drafted into teaching French each year and flee the uncomfortable situation as soon as possible."¹⁰ One high school that could not find a teacher of French has 116 grade eleven and twelve pupils

9. Orlikow L., Report on Second Language Teaching in the Nova Scotian Public Schools, September 1965, p. 17.

10. ibid. p. 16.

receiving instruction through correspondence.¹¹ Yet another device to relieve the shortage of teachers is the use of television programmes on a regular instructional basis in critical subject areas. French instruction through this medium is confined to Grades seven and eight.

2.3.4. New Brunswick

In this partially bilingual province, 116 candidates scored 27.8% in the listening test while 161 candidates scored 31.2% in the reading test. Since nearly all of these students had had between five and seven years of continuous training, one wonders why the results were so low.

Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that in New Brunswick the writing of departmental examinations is divided between grades 11 and 12. Most students write French in Grade 11 and then go on to their final junior matriculation year, usually without continuing French. Thus the majority of the New Brunswick students who wrote the MLA tests had been away from French for a year, and they no doubt suffered some loss of retention.

A glance at the 1963 departmental examination shows that 80% of the marks were allotted to translation and verb forms. In the 1964 paper there is a similar distribution of marks. However, in the latter year an oral examination (worth 10% of the final marks) was prepared on a phonograph record and proposed on an optional basis to the schools. Orlikow states

11. ibid. p. 17.

that "only ten per cent of the secondary schools accepted the record for aural testing".¹² The candidates who did not take this test were required to do a sight question of equal value on the written paper.

According to Orlikow,¹³ a great deal of experimentation is going on in the schools of New Brunswick and all curricula are "in a state of ferment." In the teaching of French at the elementary level a variety of methods are being tried out, most of them centring round a bilingual teacher whose first language is French. At the grade 7 and 8 levels, courses such as Voix et Images de France and A.L.M. have been introduced in some schools. As a result, consideration is being given at the high school level to the setting up of a special type of examination for the "new" approach and an alternative examination for the traditional approach.

But as in the other maritime provinces a critical shortage of qualified teachers still exists. "Insufficient numbers of English-speaking teachers of French enter courses stressing the oral approach at Teachers' College, Moncton University and Mount Allison University."¹⁴ There is a steady flow of qualified teachers out of the province to better paying areas. Teachers whose mother tongue is French are not available in the quantity and quality desired. There is still very little guidance or supervision of language teachers and insufficient

12. Orlikow L. Report on Second Language Teaching in the New Brunswick Public Schools. September 1965, p. 14.

13. ibid. pp. 8-15.

14. ibid. p. 23

opportunity as yet for in-service training. No specialist's certificate is issued for the teaching of French. In any case, school boards are interested in hiring generalists, not specialists. In these conditions the successful implementation of audio-lingual programmes would appear difficult, if not impossible.

2.3.5. Summary

French reading and listening comprehension skills, as measured by the M.L.A. tests, are poorly developed in the schools of the four Maritime provinces. A review of the matriculation examinations in French in these provinces points to the conclusion that a large part of classroom time is still devoted to traditional exercises in grammar and translation. There is evidence, however, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, of increased efforts to develop audio-lingual skills. But the shortage of qualified teachers complicates the achievement of this task.

2.3.6. Quebec

The results obtained by the Basic Group from Quebec exceeded the U.S. norm in the listening test (58.6 to 57.5) but were somewhat lower in the reading test (52.5 to 54.0). This performance seems rather mediocre when it is considered that the bulk of the candidates, living in a French-speaking province, had had between eight and ten years of unbroken, intensive instruction in French. One would perhaps have expected higher marks from students with such a background. Whether the explanation lies in the nature of the Quebec sample or elsewhere must remain a matter of conjecture.

The public schools of Quebec are operated on the confessional principle, with separate Protestant and Catholic

school systems. A brief glance at the French programmes in the two systems may be of interest.

2.3.6.1 English Catholic Schools

In the Catholic schools, French instruction begins in Grade 4 and is compulsory to the end of Grade 11. Emphasis is placed on an oral approach, but in Grades 4 to 7 the class teacher, not a specialist, usually provides the instruction. At the high school level the official course of study states that 50% of the marks on all examinations should be given for oral-aural proficiency and that these oral marks be entered separately from the written marks in class registers. Teachers of French for the high school grades are usually bilingual individuals whose first language is often French. Teachers from New Brunswick are frequently found in this role.

The departmental examination for Grade 11 (junior matriculation) does not have an oral component as such. Up to 20 marks, however, of the total of 200 marks allotted to French are given for the teacher's assessment of the candidate's oral skill.

With respect to teacher preparation and guidance, no specific training in language teaching is given at normal school or teachers college, and there is no language specialist category. Outside of Montreal there are no regional supervisors or inspectors of French. In-service training is usually confined to the issuing of bulletins on language teaching methodology. A departmental supervisor of French for English schools was recently appointed for the first time.

2.3.6.2 Protestant Schools

The Protestant schools of the Province of Quebec offer the most thorough French course of any public school system in Canada. The prime need of learning the language of the majority in a French-speaking milieu is no doubt an important driving force behind the programme.

The prescribed course begins in Grade 3 (in many schools in Grade 1) and continues in well articulated steps to the end of Grade 11. The methods are eclectic rather than purely audio-lingual, but the emphasis on the spoken language is great. Special textbooks and aids have been prepared for each grade, and there is experimentation as well with new methods. In some areas where competent teachers are available, the teaching of history, geography and health is conducted in French. In schools where this experiment is being tried, the results in oral and written French have been exceptionally good.

Such a complete programme places heavy demands on teachers. In some 80 elementary schools in Montreal there are about 60 French specialists, but they are unable to handle the whole French commitment and require help from the regular classroom teachers. The proportion of specialists is less outside of Montreal. At the high school level teachers have various qualifications for teaching French; they are generally specialists in the senior grades and at least bilingual in the lower grades. It is possible for selected teachers with the required academic background to become specialists through attendance at summer courses and a subsequent probationary period.

Supervision of French instruction is provided at both departmental and local levels. In Montreal there is a coordinator of French assisted by two supervisors, and high schools appoint department heads. Outside of the metropolitan area there is usually less local supervision, but schools receive regular visits from the French Inspector.

In the Grade 11 matriculation examination 100 marks are given for oral French and 100 marks for written French. The oral test consists of a 12 to 15 minute interview conducted by school department heads in the Montreal area and by the French inspector and designated assistants elsewhere. The test consists of general questions as well as questions based on the texts selected for intensive study.

2.3.7. Ontario

In Ontario 904 candidates averaged 46.8% on the listening test, some 10% below the American norm. On the reading test 1497 candidates averaged 58.9%, about five per cent higher than the American norm.

It should be recalled that Ontario students normally enter university after Grade 13 (senior matriculation). They are therefore a little older on graduation than the national average. Those entering at the Grade 12 level must do a qualifying year at the few Ontario universities that will accept them. Of the 1500 candidates for the reading test fewer than 100 had not completed Grade 13, and only 250 had had more than five years instruction in French. The teaching of French in the elementary schools of Ontario - with the exception of Ottawa and a few other

bilingual areas - is a recent development. Many schools in central and southern Ontario are still without a French programme at the primary level.

The senior matriculation year in Ontario has often been labelled a cram course, and partly as a result of this criticism the whole programme of studies for Grade 13 is now under revision. The intensive nature of Grade 13 is perhaps reflected in the following table in which the performance on the MLA tests of Grade 12 graduates is contrasted with that of the Grade 13 group:

Table 2-D. Test results of Ontario Grade 12 and Grade 13 graduates compared.

	<u>4 years h.s. French ending in Gr. 12</u>	<u>5 years h.s. French ending in Gr. 13</u>
Reading	38.0	59.7
Listening	37.6	46.9

The superior results obtained by the Grade 13 candidates, particularly in reading comprehension, is an indication of the considerable improvement that takes place in the senior matriculation year.

In interpreting the relatively low listening marks of Ontario candidates, the following considerations with respect to the Ontario French programme may be pertinent:

- (a) Textbooks. Oral skills are stressed in the first two years of high school (Grades 9 & 10). But even at these levels the textbooks are traditional in format, despite the development of auxiliary recorded material based on these texts. The result is that the grammar-translation approach is still very much in evidence and in subsequent grades is often intensified. In September 1965, however, a

number of selected schools introduced as a pilot project the audio-lingual text Ecouter et Parler¹⁵ in Grade 9. The second book of the same series will be used by these schools in Grade 10 next year. This could be the beginning of a long awaited change in French instruction in Ontario.

- (b) External examination. Since the mid-fifties the Grade 13 French examination has included a dictation based on the authors work. A fifteen-minute aural comprehension test (on a record) was introduced in 1963 and steps are now being taken to add a speaking test. Candidates have generally done well on the listening tests given to date. The stimulus material consists of anecdotes followed by general comprehension questions, and partial sentences to be completed by selection from multiple choice answers. Although items are spoken at normal speed, they are always repeated once. In 1965 a single departmental French paper for Grade 13 was introduced for the first time. The percentage distribution of marks for the various questions was as follows: oral-aural (dictation and listening) - 13; translation - 26; comprehension questions based on the authors text and two sight passages - 31; free composition - 15; objective test consisting of vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics - 15.

15. Côté, Levy, O'Connor, Ecouter et Parler, Holt Rhinehart and Winston - New York, March 1963.

- (c) Teaching in French. The introduction of oral-aural components in the matriculation examination has spurred teachers to use French as far as possible as the vehicle of instruction. But not all teachers have been converted to this practice, some of them, no doubt, because of insufficient oral facility. In this connection about one third of the Ontario candidates stated that they had never had a teacher who spoke primarily French in class, while another third stated that they had had such a teacher for a year or two only.
- (d) Teaching force. Language teachers are in short supply in Ontario as elsewhere. This shortage has hindered the spread of French instruction at the elementary level. Teachers who have an honours degree in high school subjects may become high school specialists by following special courses at the Ontario College of Education. Such specialists receive higher pay than generalists. Theoretically, heads of departments in high schools are required to have a Type "A" (i.e. a specialist's) certificate for their particular field; but this is not always so in practice. A pre-service course in language teaching at the secondary level is offered to prospective French and German teachers at the Ontario College of Education. But no similar course is yet available to elementary school student teachers at the various teacher colleges.
- (e) Supervision and guidance. The Ontario Department of Education provides a good deal of written material

and a number of services that aim to improve modern language instruction. Inspectors visit high school language classes annually and offer helpful advice about second language methodology. The Department also holds a summer seminar for heads of departments that is particularly helpful in standardizing instruction and improving administration. Department heads are usually conscientious in supervising their less experienced assistants and in preparing detailed guides for instruction in each grade. The Canadian Modern Language Review, published in Toronto, provides informative articles on language teaching as well as examination materials based on Ontario courses of study.

2.3.8 Manitoba

Manitoba stood third after Ontario and Quebec in both the reading and the listening tests. The average of 49.3% in reading was fairly close to the U.S. norm, but the listening score of 35.6% was far below the American average. Most of the Manitoba candidates had had six years of training and had entered university after Grade 12. Since the University of Manitoba does not require a second language for graduation, we may assume that the Manitoba students enrolled there in First Year French were all volunteers.

A review of the 1964 Grade 12 departmental French paper for this province reveals that there were no listening or dictation tests in the examination, and that nearly 60% of the marks were allotted to translation. This absence of oral-aural components explains in large measure the poor showing on the listening test in Manitoba and in most other provinces. Regardless of pious

objectives set forth in provincial courses of study, the average teacher will not devote much time to audio-lingual skills if these are not tested in the external examination. The latter, for all practical purposes, becomes the course of study.

It is no doubt the realization of this truth which led in June 1965 to the introduction of a Grade 12 French paper in which translation was virtually eliminated and a listening test was included. Further, in his Manitoba report, Orlikow notes "a great enthusiasm for conversational French...among school personnel at various levels of the educational hierarchy".¹⁶

With respect to language study, he adds:

"The emphasis on second language instruction in the English-speaking public schools of Manitoba will be altered within the next few years. More pupils are pursuing language study in earlier grades; some shift is seen from the traditional emphasis upon translation; increased attention will be placed upon a continuous development of skill through the grades"....¹⁷

But these changes, actual and proposed, do not necessarily involve corresponding changes in existing teaching practice. The same inadequacies noted elsewhere, particularly in the Maritime provinces, also exist in Manitoba. There is a lack of qualified language teachers, a fact which "has led some school districts to hire any teacher with a French name."¹⁸ With respect to pre-service training the first full-time instructor in methods in modern languages was appointed by the Department in September 1965.

16. Orlikow, L., Report on Second Language Teaching in The Manitoba Public Schools, June, 1965, page 26.

17. *ibid.*, page 31.

18. *ibid.*, page 22.

In-service training is chiefly confined to Winnipeg, the only locality to have a full-time supervisor of languages. Departmental attempts to set up retraining programmes for language teachers have attracted only a few dozen volunteers each year. Supervision of teachers both by departmental inspectors and at the local level is minimal. Finally, the problem of obtaining adequate funds for education is a serious one in Manitoba. In Orlikow's words,

"....the existing situation in Manitoba is beyond the resources of the provincial and local governments. A host of demands are pressing for recognition - new science, new mathematics, higher education, teachers' salaries, school construction. Second language instruction does not stand in the front rank in the competition for scarce resources."¹⁹

2.3.9 Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan 384 candidates averaged 26.2% on the listening test while 460 candidates averaged 41% on the reading test. Virtually all candidates had studied French from Grade 9 to the end of Grade 12.

Despite this four-year period of sequential training, the listening score was the lowest in Canada after Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the Saskatchewan students had had much oral-aural practice in their French classes. In this connection, it was noted that among the aims listed for the study of French in the official programme (1950), the ability to read simple French literature is given first place. Further, no test of aural comprehension was included in the provincial

19. *ibid.*, page 31.

Grade 12 examination held in June 1964.

In the past, the teaching of French in Saskatchewan has suffered from the same deficiencies noted in other provinces. Unrevised programmes of study, outmoded textbooks, and insufficient training aids have fostered poor instruction. Teachers have not received adequate training in methodology, either through pre-service or in-service courses, and there has been a general lack of supervision and guidance at both departmental and local levels. Although some teachers with French background are engaged in the teaching of both Français and French, such individuals comprise only a quarter of the French teacher force. Of the remaining three quarters, many lack fluency and competency as language teachers.

This somewhat bleak picture of second language teaching in Saskatchewan is now undergoing a number of important changes for the better. Among the new developments, either projected or in being, the following are perhaps the most significant:

- (a) The Department of Education has given wide authorization to qualified teachers for the experimental use of a number of French courses based on an oral approach: A.L.M., Ecouter et Parler, Je Parle Français, Parlons Français, and so on. The Saskatoon school system has been the leading user of these trial courses. In June 1966, the first group of Saskatoon students trained entirely by audio-lingual methods will complete Grade 12. These students, instead of trying the departmental examination, will be graded by their classroom teachers. This use of teacher marks as the sole

basis for matriculation standing in French is probably unprecedented in Canadian education.

- (b) Much of the credit for the introduction of experimental courses, as well as many other proposals for revision of the official French programme, is due to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. This body, through its advisory committee on the teaching of French, has been conducting a comparative study of the trial courses since 1963. The results of this investigation have provided the basis of S.T.F. recommendations for changes in the curriculum.
- (c) With respect to the improvement of language teacher qualifications, new winter and summer courses in language and methodology are being offered at both the Saskatoon and Regina branches of the University of Saskatchewan. The Saskatoon Association of Teachers of French is also providing valuable information and advice on the techniques of instruction in the form of a periodic Newsletter. In addition, the provision of bursaries and grants by school boards for language study is becoming more general.
- (d) By 1967 second language instruction will be extended to Grades 7 and 8. The curricula now being developed for these new courses are based on an audio-lingual approach. This extension of the training sequence will obviously increase the demand for language teachers, already in short supply. It is not surprising, therefore, that the possibility of teaching French through television is being explored. Radio

has been used for this purpose but only as an incidental aid to classroom instruction. The quality of these broadcasts has not been particularly good.

Just what the impact of all these changes and proposals will be is not yet clear. As already pointed out, there has been a notable shift to an oral approach in the schools of Saskatoon and, to a lesser degree, in other urban systems. The problem remains, however, of extending this change to schools in rural areas.
20

2.3.10 Alberta

In Alberta some 200 candidates scored 34.3% on the listening test and 37.5% on the reading test. The former mark was close to the Manitoba average, but the reading score was the second lowest for the western provinces.

Virtually all the Alberta group had entered university from Grade 12 and had had between two and six years of sequential training. One hundred and fifty candidates were at the three and four year levels with scores as follows:

Table 2-E Comparison of test scores of Alberta students at third and fourth year levels.

	<u>3 years study</u>	<u>4 years study</u>
No. of candidates	70	80
Reading %	37.3	38.3
Listening %	30.7	36.0

20. See Orlikow, L., Report on Second Language Teaching in the Saskatchewan Schools, November 1965, pp. 1-37.

It will be noted that the reading ability of the two groups was about the same, but that there was an appreciable difference in listening skill. These results may perhaps be explained by the fact that the normal pattern in Alberta for students taking matriculation French is three years of instruction beginning in Grade 10. There is also an optional course in conversational French offered in Grade 9, the last year of junior high school. The eighty candidates who took this additional training apparently profited less in reading than in listening from their extra year of French.

As in many other provinces, the teaching of French in Alberta is being extended to the elementary grades. But, as Orlikow notes, the Albertan development is different in that these changes are being initiated chiefly at the local level.

"The rapid growth in French studies in elementary and junior high schools has been accomplished without the official sanction of the Department of Education. At most, the Department has exercised a benevolent neutrality. The initiation of major programmes has rested with local personnel in Calgary and Edmonton. School boards and administrative staffs in the two cities have diverted a considerable amount of resources towards design, evaluation, equipment and supernumerary staff."²¹

A good example of the pre-eminent rôle of Calgary and Edmonton in the extension of language study is seen in the television courses in French offered in these two cities. Since the two programmes are similar, only one - the Calgary project - will be described. At 9.15 p.m. daily there is a 15 - minute French programme addressed to one of the middle grades (Grades 4, 5, 6) of all Calgary elementary schools, both public and separate.

21. Orlikow, L., Report on Second Language Teaching in the Albertan Schools, October 1965, page 3.

The broadcasts consist of the series Parlons Français produced in Boston. After each television lesson there are two follow-up teaching periods before the next broadcast.

Perhaps the most significant factor in this venture is that it is the regular classroom teacher, not a specialist, who is responsible for supervision and follow-up of television instruction. Prior to taking up their language training duties, teachers follow a special course in methods consisting of fifteen weekly sessions, held during class hours. Three French supervisors visit classrooms, conduct in-service workshops, give model lessons, and prepare lesson materials. The latter consist of lesson outlines, drills, and extras for variety in presentation. Teachers are assessed for their enthusiasm rather than for their mastery of the subject.

This use of television and partially trained classroom teachers to conduct an elementary French programme is Calgary's (and Edmonton's) answer to the extreme shortage of language teachers. With the limited objectives of the course the system is apparently working well, thanks to the strong support offered by school boards and school principals, and to the unflagging enthusiasm of the teachers employed in the project. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that there is a move on foot to extend T.V. French on a province-wide basis.²²

22. See Orlikow, *ibid.*, pp. 12-20 for a complete report on the French television courses broadcast from Edmonton and Calgary.

As a follow-up to Parlons Français both the Calgary and Edmonton school systems use Voix et Images de France in the junior high school (Grades 7, 8, 9). In Calgary strong support has been supplied by the University of Alberta in the form of teacher training courses. The course is less popular in Edmonton, perhaps because of a greater proportion of bilingual teachers, many of whom feel that they do not need the help of mechanical devices in the teaching of French.

With respect to in-service training mention must be made of the Modern and Classical Language Council of the Alberta Teachers Association. The Council holds annual conferences with special speakers, demonstrations of new techniques, and displays of teaching materials. The council also holds local workshops in communities where there are no resident supervisors, and it publishes The Bulletin, a language journal, as well as a Newsletter.

Supervision of instruction at the high school level is limited. There are no special inspectors for each language, and the appointment of department heads is a new development.

One further fact that serves to underline the shortage of qualified French teachers in Alberta is the important rôle played by the Correspondence Branch in the provision of French instruction. The French section of the Branch has no fewer than eight full-time instructors to correct the large number of exercises received. Thus in May 1965 there were 1515 persons enrolled in high school French: 441 in Grade 10, 387 in Grade 12. More than half of these students were of high school age.²³

23. *ibid.*, p. 9

2.3.11 British Columbia

In this province there were 644 candidates for the listening test and 755 candidates for the reading test. Average scores for the two tests were 29.6 and 35.4 respectively.

It should be noted that both U.B.C. and the University of Victoria require two years of language study for a degree in Arts. They are similar in this respect to the University of Saskatchewan where one year's study is obligatory. At the University of Manitoba, as we have seen, a second language is not required for graduation, and the same holds true at the University of Alberta. Since most students attend university in their home provinces, it is clear that the Manitoba and Alberta students were generally volunteers for First Year French, whereas those from B.C. and Saskatchewan were not. Just what effect this difference in status may have had on performance, we do not know. But it does indicate another way in which the provincial samples were not uniform, and hence the need for caution in comparing test scores between provinces.

Analysis of the B.C. results is complicated by the wide variations in years of training that existed among the candidates. There was also a lack of uniformity with respect to the grade level at which candidates had completed their last year of high school French. These discrepancies are explained by the fact that U.B.C. will accept for admission students who have had only two years French instruction, and these two years may be taken in any two consecutive grades between Grades 9 and 13. It should be added that French is now obligatory in Grade 8, thus providing a third year of French study for those students going on to

university.

Table 2-F shows the distribution of candidates with reference to the last grade in which French was studied in high school.

Table 2-F. Distribution of British Columbia candidates according to grade level of final year of high school French.

	<u>Last Year of High School French</u>			
	<u>Gr 13</u>	<u>Gr 12</u>	<u>Gr 11</u>	<u>Gr 10</u>
No. of listening test candidates	69	343	176	65
No. of reading test candidates	71	428	180	66

It will be apparent that the 240 odd candidates who completed their French course in Grades 10 or 11 were subject to a loss of retention before entering university (usually after Grade 12 - junior matriculation). For this reason and also because of the large number of candidates with only two years of high school French, a simpler version of the MLA tests - Form L.A. - was used in B.C. for students with less than four years of French. Their scores were then converted to equivalent M.A. scores.

Table 2-G below shows the distribution of B.C. candidates with respect to years of training in French, together with the average scores of the various groups. It will be noted that the

figures above the double line refer to the listening test and those below to the reading test.

Table 2-G. Test scores of B.C. candidates related to years of training in French.

	<u>Years of Training in French</u>						
	<u>2 Yrs.</u>	<u>3 Yrs.</u>	<u>4 Yrs.</u>	<u>5 Yrs.</u>	<u>6 Yrs.</u>	<u>7 Yrs.</u>	<u>8 Yrs.</u>
No. of Candidates	114	158	175	67	27	18	31
Listening Scores	20.7	26.4	33.5	32.0	33.1	41.7	43.7
<hr/>							
No. of Candidates	117	167	226	79	33	21	36
Reading Scores	22.3	29.7	42.6	40.6	40.8	43.1	49.9

In view of the large number of candidates who had fewer than four years of training (272 in the listening test and 284 in the reading test) it is not surprising that the B.C. results were far below the U.S. norms.

As Orlikow points out,²⁴ educational developments in B.C. since 1960 have been dominated by the Report of the Chant Royal Commission on Education. In the field of language learning the Commissioners were skeptical about the advantages claimed for beginning the study of French in the elementary grades. Their opinion was that, in view of the shortage of qualified teachers, the teaching of French could be done more proficiently at the high

24. Orlikow, L., Report on Second Language Teaching in the Public Schools of British Columbia, December, 1965, p. 1.

school level. As a result of this thinking there has been no general spread of elementary school programmes in French. French may be begun on a permissive basis in Grades 6 and 7 provided that properly accredited teachers are available, and a detailed programme of studies has been prepared to this end. But such courses are offered in very few districts outside of Coquitlam and Vancouver.

In Grade 8, however, as noted above, French has been made compulsory so that "all or more pupils will benefit from the experience of learning how others express thought and how they can communicate in a language other than their own."²⁵

With respect to high school French (Grades 9 to 13) the Chant Commission felt that the study of a "foreign" language should be confined to pupils in the academic (college preparatory) stream; and they recommended that a third year of high school language study be introduced. The Commission found little evidence of interest in French as a means of communication. Rather, it was considered by the students as just another academic hurdle to be surmounted as a prerequisite to university entrance. In this connection Orlikow notes that French 92 stands only tenth in popularity among honours courses in the senior grades (11 to 13).²⁶ No doubt one of the reasons for this low enrolment is that, next to mathematics, French has had the highest failure rate in the past in matriculation examinations. Another reason is that graduates of the French 92 course on entering U.B.C.

25. *ibid.*, p. 24.

26. *ibid.*, p. 8.

are required to take French 120, a difficult language and literature course. Those candidates with only two years of high school French, on the other hand, are enrolled in French 110, a course which assumes very little previous knowledge of the language. It is little wonder that most students in the academic stream opt out of taking French 92.

When we consider the external examination, we find yet another reason why B.C. students tend to terminate their French studies early. Those candidates with only two years of French are not required to take this examination; they are admitted to U.B.C. simply on the strength of having successfully completed two years study of the language. The matriculation paper, reserved for French 92 students, is at the Ontario Grade 12 level of difficulty. The paper is extremely well prepared, requiring pupils to answer entirely in French. No attempt is made to test aural comprehension.

Turning from pupils to teachers we find many of the difficulties and shortcomings met in other provinces. Teachers of modern languages are in very short supply, particularly in certain rural areas. This had led the Department to explore the use of closed circuit television as one answer to the problem.²⁷ With teachers of French-speaking background in short supply there has been recruitment of graduates from English and Scottish universities. Of this group, Orlikow says:

27. *ibid.*, pp. 31-34

"Their orientation is towards France and to many the language of Quebec is regarded as patois. A number were quite insistent that if cultural objectives are important then they should be taught in social studies - not French. Since approximately one-half the teachers to whom the researcher was referred (by the Department) were of this national background, one can conclude that their influence is much greater than their numbers warrant."²⁸

There is little supervision of instruction either by the Department or locally. Where department heads are appointed their duties tend to be administrative rather than advisory.

2.4 Findings

Our province by province investigation of second language teaching has served to place the MLA test results within the context of the Orlikow reports and of other documents relating to teaching conditions and the various types of external examination in French at the matriculation level. Seen within this larger framework it may be said that the generally low scores make sense. Added to the information we have from other quarters they are symptomatic of a general malaise in the teaching of French across Canada. The seriousness of the situation will be the more apparent when it is recalled that the test candidates - whatever the differences between them - were an elite group. They were part of that relatively small number of young Canadians who had qualified for university entrance, not only in French but in all required subjects. Furthermore, as we have seen, many had had considerably more than four years of language training.

28. ibid., p. 27.

3. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Performance of Basic and Residual Groups

Question 1. In what country were you born?

Question 2. What was your father's native language?

Question 3. What was your mother's native language?

Question 4. What is the chief language spoken in your home?

It will be recalled that this study is confined to what was designated as the Basic Group (page 12), that is, to those candidates who were born in Canada of English-speaking parents, who spoke English at home, and who had received all their education in their home provinces.

As a result of this selection there remained a residual group consisting of two sub-groups:

- (a) English-speaking students who had been educated in two or more provinces; and
- (b) students of mixed background, that is, with one parent or both parents not English.

We shall return to the students in (a) in the discussion of question 23. Meanwhile, it may be of interest to compare the performance of the students of mixed background with that of the Basic Group. Table 3-A below makes this comparison for the listening test candidates. In order to get a number of subjects in each province that would be statistically significant it was decided to examine only two categories from the mixed group: (1) students with one or both parents French and (2) students with both

parents of any ethnic background other than English or French. These two groups are designated in the table as the "French" group and the "Other Ethnic" group.

Table 3-A. Comparison of achievement in listening test of Basic Group students and students of mixed ethnic background.

	<u>Basic Group</u>	<u>French Group</u>	<u>Other Ethnic Group</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>LT score</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>LT score</u>
B.C.	664	29.6	19	47.5
Alta.	205	34.3	35	65.9
Sask.	384	26.2	36	43.9
Man.	271	35.6	83	81.4
Ont.	904	46.8	108	71.2
Que.	255	58.6	32	75.9
N.B.	116	27.8	17	49.1
N.S.	223	25.0	15	46.3
Nfld.	306	22.9	0	-
Totals	3,328		345	571
Averages		35.8	67.7	42.9

Note: LT score = listening test score.
RT score = reading test score.

Before we begin to analyse these figures, it should be stressed that the tabulations on which they are based did not take into account the answer to question 4 regarding the language spoken in the home. In the case of the French group, whose scores are high, there can be little doubt that many candidates spoke

French at home. On the contrary, in the "Other Ethnic" group there were probably a number of candidates who spoke English to their parents, since this practice is fairly common in the homes of New Canadians.

Comparing now the scores of the Basic Group with those of the French Group we see a wide margin of advantage in favour of the latter. In Alberta the difference is 31% and in Manitoba it is 45%. Even in Quebec with its high Basic Group average the improvement was 17%. But the number of French Group candidates in each province was small, except in Manitoba and Ontario.

In contrast, the scores of the "Other Ethnic" group do not reveal any significant margin of superiority over the Basic Group, except in Ontario and Quebec. There the differential is about eight per cent. The remaining figures do not lead to any positive conclusion. A 4% advantage for the "Other Ethnic" group in British Columbia is balanced by a 3% deficit in Alberta. In the Maritimes the number of cases is insufficient for comparison.

3.2 Self-Estimate of Second Language Facility

Question 5. Do you speak any language other than English well enough to carry on a conversation?

Question 6. Do you write any language other than English well enough to compose a letter to a friend?

Question 7. Are there any languages other than English that you can read well enough to understand a newspaper?

The answers to these three questions were grouped and coded in such a way as to provide self-estimates of the candidate's second language ability (a) in French and (b) in languages other than French.

With respect to knowledge of French nearly one-third of the candidates stated that they were unable to speak, read or write the language with the degree of sophistication indicated in the questions. The test scores of these candidates were generally lower than those of candidates who claimed that they had the requisite skills.

Table 3-B. Self estimate of ability to speak, write, read French related to listening test scores.

	<u>All Three Skills Considered Insufficient</u>		<u>All Three Skills Considered Adequate</u>	
	<u>No. of subjects</u>	<u>Listening Scores</u>	<u>No. of subjects</u>	<u>Listening Scores</u>
B.C.	263	25.0	77	38.4
Alta.	71	27.8	20	48.0
Sask.	166	24.5	14	30.7
Man.	65	29.0	41	43.5
Ont.	143	35.4	217	50.5
Que.	21	46.9	120	62.8
N.B.	76	25.0	6	36.7
N.S.	120	24.5	14	29.3
Nfld.	145	22.6	5	27.0

In most provinces there were very few candidates from the Basic Group who stated that they spoke, read, or wrote two or more modern languages in addition to their native English. The one exception was Ontario where there were fairly substantial numbers in this category. These students made significantly higher scores

than the Ontario averages of 46.8% for listening and 58.9% for reading.

Table 3-C. Knowledge of two or more languages other than English related to reading and listening test scores - Ontario.

	<u>Speak more than one</u>	<u>Write more than one</u>	<u>Read more than one</u>
No. of subjects	67	121	110
Listening scores	65.6	62.0	58.4
No. of subjects	83	140	130
Reading scores	73.7	72.1	70.0

3.3 Extent of Second Language Study

Question 8. Have you studied any languages other than English or French at school?

Fairly large groups indicated that they had studied one language in addition to English and French. Those who had done so generally bettered the provincial averages, but only by two or three percentage points. Those candidates who had studied two or more languages in addition to English and French were not numerous except in Ontario. The scores of this Ontario group were 7% above the average in listening and nearly 9% higher in reading.

Question 9. In which grades did you study French in school?

The answers to this question were coded to show the number of years of sequential training up to and including the final year of French instruction. As we have seen, the length of the typical high school cycle for the teaching of French differs from province to province, varying between two to five years. Similarly there are wide variations in the amount of training given at the

elementary school level, where "a year's training" may consist of one period per day or one period per week. The quality of instruction is also far from uniform, with large differences from school to school, even within the same school system. Moreover, provincial programmes place varying emphasis on the acquisition of the four language skills. For all these reasons the correlation between years of training and achievement in the reading and listening tests, though usually positive, was not always so. Further, the number of statistical cases outside the normal or typical streams was usually too small to serve as a basis for comparison. In any case it is felt that this matter has been sufficiently covered in the analysis by provinces.

3.4 French as Language of Instruction

Question 10. Did you ever have a teacher who spoke only or primarily French in class?

Table 3-D (column 4) shows the percentage of LT candidates by province who answered this question negatively. In seven of the nine provinces the numbers are high - between 74 and 89 per cent. These figures are balanced by relatively low averages of 33 and 35 per cent respectively in Ontario and Quebec.

Comparing now the LT scores of the negative and positive respondents we note in most provinces appreciable differences in favour of the latter group. If we put together these two facts - higher incidence of instruction in French in Ontario and Quebec and higher scores among students who received such instruction - we have at least a partial explanation of why listening scores were higher in these provinces than in the rest of Canada.

Table 3-D. Teaching in French. Comparison of test scores of positive and negative respondents to question whether part of their instruction had been primarily in French.

<u>Prov.</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Negative Replies</u>			<u>Positive Replies</u>		
		<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>LT Scores</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>LT Scores</u>
B.C.	664	511	77	28	153	23	35
Alta.	205	151	74	32	54	26	40
Sask.	384	327	85	26	57	15	30
Man.	271	215	79	34	56	21	43
Ont.	904	301	33	42	603	67	50
Que.	255	90	35	54	165	65	61
N.B.	116	87	75	27	29	25	31
N.S.	223	185	83	24	38	17	28
Nfld.	306	271	89	23	35	11	24
Totals	3,336	2,146			1,190		
Averages			64		30		46

Question 11. Did you ever have a French teacher whose native language was French?

The pattern of replies here was very similar to those received for the previous question. About 65% said that they had never had such a teacher. But on the whole there was not much difference in scores between students who said that they had had a native French teacher and those who said they had not. This is perhaps evidence of the fact that the language spoken during the French lesson is determined less by the native language of the teacher than by the teaching method employed. If the grammar-translation

approach is used, a good deal of the time will be spent in talking about French in English. If on the other hand the method is audio-lingual or direct, most of the time will be spent talking in French.

3.5 Language Laboratory Availability

Question 12. Was there a language laboratory in the last school you attended?

Fully 3,960 students out of a total of 4579 who wrote the reading test reported that their school had no laboratory. There was evidence that some candidates who reported affirmatively were not certain about the meaning of the term. At any rate no clear relationship emerged between the test scores and the number of hours per month devoted to laboratory training. This was partly due, no doubt, to the small numbers involved in each province. One may also conjecture that in some schools the laboratory was used chiefly for remedial work with poor pupils--perhaps on a voluntary basis.

3.6 School Marks in French

Question 13. What was your final mark in your last year of French?

In each province there was good correlation between school marks in French and both LT and RT scores. Those candidates who had obtained first class honours in French in the departmental or school examination generally scored higher marks in both MLA tests than those who had received second class honours, and so on.

In other words both criteria (school marks and MLA test scores) graded the provincial samples similarly. This fact is illustrated below with respect to RT scores in Manitoba. LT scores could have been used equally well, and a similar distribution would have been obtained using the results of any other province.

Table 3-E. Final school mark in French vs. reading test score-Manitoba.

<u>School Marks(%)</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>	<u>RT Score</u>
80-100	44	15%	65.0
70-79	84	29	54.9
60-69	86	30	44.9
50-59	64	22	39.2
Below 50	12	4	38.3
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Totals	290	100	

Question 14. How did your final marks in your last year of French compare with your other grades that year?

About 20% of the candidates replied that they did better in French than in other school subjects and 37% said that they did worse. The provinces fell into two groups with respect to the percentage of candidates who said that they did better in French.

<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
N.S. 4%	Alta 37%
Nfld. 9%	Ont. 28%
B.C. 11%	Man. 26%
Sask. 12%	Que. 26%
	N.B. 23%

One is tempted to infer that French is a difficult or unpopular subject in the low provinces, and we have had some evidence to this effect in the reports on the provinces concerned. But the nature of the sample is also a factor here, since the high group includes candidates from the universities of Alberta, Manitoba, and New Brunswick where French is not required for a degree.

3.7 Conversation with French Friends

Question 15. Before coming to college did you have any French friends? If so, how often did you speak French with them?

Table 3-F shows (column 1) that in six provinces out of nine three quarters or more of the candidates had no French friends. Among those who had (columns 2 and 3), nearly all conversed in English rather than French. Hence most of the figures in the final column approach 100%. It would have been interesting to probe into the reasons for the dominance of English in the bilingual situation.

It should be added that there was some evidence - in Ontario and Quebec - that candidates who had French friends with whom they spoke French most of the time did obtain higher marks in listening than candidates who did not have such contacts. But the number of cases was small at the top of the five-point scale used in the question.

Table 3-F. Percentage distribution of listening test candidates' answers to question whether they had previously had French friends.

No	<u>Yes, but never spoke French</u>	<u>Yes, but seldom spoke French</u>	<u>Percentage totals</u>
B.C. 79%	9%	10%	98%
Alta. 81	6	11	98
Sask. 80	13	6	99
Man. 75	12	11	98
Ont. 67	8	18	93
Que. 40	11	31	82
N.B. 62	20	15	97
N.S. 75	13	11	99
Nfld. 82	7	8	97

3.8 Use of French Mass Media

Questions 16, 17, 18.

About how often do you (a) watch French television, (b) listen to French radio, (c) read French newspapers or magazines?

The answers to these questions point to the conclusion that the candidates had made little use of French language mass media to improve their French. Since French television is not widespread outside of Quebec, the opportunities for regular viewing were simply non-existent for most candidates. Even in Quebec, however, only 24% of the RT candidates replied that they watched French T.V. more than once a month. With respect to French radio, which has a far broader national coverage, the numbers listening with any regularity were almost as small. The reading of French periodicals and newspapers on a regular basis was also an infrequent activity for students outside of French Canada. These negative facts are summed up in the following table.

Table 3-G. Percentage of reading test candidates who used French mass media more than once a month.

	<u>T.V.</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>Newspapers, Magazines</u>
B.C.	1%	1%	6%
Alta.	7	14	7
Sask.	2	5	2
Man.	11	7	7
Ont.	6	14	13
Que.	24	30	32
N.B.	5	6	4
N.S.	5	5	3
Nfld.	8	2	1

The average scores have not been included in the table because the number of statistical cases was too small to be significant in all provinces except Ontario and Quebec. Here both listening and reading scores were six to nine per cent higher for candidates who used the mass media more than once per month.

3.9 Contacts with French Milieu

Question 19. Have you ever lived in a community where French was spoken by more than one-third of the people? If not, have you ever visited such a community?

(a) Visiting. There was no discernible, or at any rate significant, effect of visiting on listening or reading test scores, the results of the "visitors" being sometimes above and sometimes below the provincial averages, with only slight differences between them. Perhaps if the

duration of the visits had been known a correlation might have been found between achievement and the longer sojourns. Most short family visits, with little real exposure to the language or the people, might be expected to affect attitudes rather than skills.

- (b) Living. Here there appeared to be a correlation with achievement as indicated in Table 3-H.

Table 3-H. Living in a partially French community related to listening and reading test scores.

Note: Columns n and s show the number of cases and test scores for candidates who had lived in a community one-third or more French-speaking.

Columns N and S show the number of cases and test scores for candidates who had not visited or lived in such a community.

Listening Test					Province	Reading Test				
<u>n</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>s-S</u>		<u>n</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>s-S</u>
26	42	521	29	13	B.C.	30	44	593	35	9
20	47	133	34	13	Alta.	21	50	134	39	11
40	36	265	26	10	Sask.	49	46	315	41	5
57	56	146	34	22	Man.	61	63	154	50	13
207	53	345	46	7	Ont.	319	63	565	59	4
313	63	24	53	10	Que.	727	56	53	45	11
40	37	28	24	13	N.B.	57	40	46	30	10
17	32	114	25	7	N.S.	18	38	116	35	3
14	23	224	23	1	Nfld.	19	28	320	30	-2
734		1820			Totals	1301		2296		
	54		32		Averages		56		42	

It will be noted that the difference between s and S is positive in all cases but one, and that the difference is appreciable in several instances. In many provinces, however, the value of either n or N is too small to justify a firm generalization from the data. Further, as in the case of visiting, we do not know either the length of time the candidate lived in a French environment or the period of his life - early or late - that he did so. These and other variables - we are no longer dealing with the Basic Group here - no doubt had an effect on test scores.

3.10 Attitudes towards French

Question 20. What are your reasons for studying French?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (a) Essential for work | (f) To travel abroad |
| (b) Useful for work | (g) To travel in Quebec |
| (c) To speak with French friends | (h) Duty as a Canadian |
| (d) To use French mass media | (i) Needed for university |
| (e) To read French literature | degree |

For convenience, the analysis of this question and also of questions 21 and 22, will be confined to the replies received from LT candidates. The exclusion of the RT candidates will not affect the conclusions reached, since the pattern of replies in any one province was basically the same for both groups.

Table 3-I. Nine reasons for studying French.
Percentage of positive responses
for each reason.

<u>No. of Cases</u>	Reasons for Studying French									
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	
B.C.	664	6%	40%	17%	42%	46%	75%	60%	61%	60%
Alta.	204	22	58	33	65	66	83	67	66	33
Sask.	384	9	45	20	45	40	65	57	57	84
Man.	271	12	62	32	64	60	81	63	60	34
Ont.	904	23	50	44	70	66	83	77	75	39
Que.	255	28	67	64	75	56	61	60	83	27
N.B.	116	9	76	46	56	41	67	69	62	53
N.S.	223	5	47	32	58	39	64	67	66	78
Nfld.	306	22	61	30	57	55	57	66	70	82
Averages		16	52	34	59	54	73	66	67	54

Beginning with a vertical examination of this table, it is clear from columns (a) and (b) that relatively few candidates considered French essential for work, though substantial numbers considered it useful for this purpose. The New Brunswick figures (9% and 76%) are the farthest apart in this respect.

Column (c) indicates that the desire to speak with French friends was most frequently mentioned by Quebec students (64%). The percentages were much smaller in most other provinces, especially those where the opportunities to speak French were fewer.

The patterns in columns (d) and (e) - use of French mass media and reading of French literature - are similar except in Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia where the mass media figures are considerably higher.

Column (f) shows that travel abroad was the most frequently chosen reason for studying French in four provinces and that it elicited a high response in four others. It does not follow, as we shall see later, that it was considered the most important reason. It was probably accepted as the least innocuous reason: foreign travel generally appeals to the young, and knowledge of a second language is obviously useful to the traveller abroad.

The desire to travel in Quebec - column (g) - also received a preponderance of positive responses. The Western provinces showed a preference for travel abroad, whereas the Maritime provinces opted for travel in Quebec.

The figures in column (h), which are similar to those in column (g), indicate that a majority of the candidates in each province considered it their duty as Canadians to learn French. For English-speaking Quebecers, who had received eight or nine years of French instruction in a French milieu, this was the most frequently chosen reason.

The final reason suggested for studying French - the need for obtaining language credits in order to get a degree - was strongly supported by the candidates from Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and (to a lesser degree) British Columbia. In Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, however, this reason was one of the least popular.

The question arises whether there was any significant difference in test scores between candidates who identified themselves positively with each of the nine reasons and those who responded negatively. It may be answered at once that, with respect to the first eight reasons, the positive respondents generally made higher marks on both the listening and reading tests than the negative respondents. However, the differences were sometimes very slight, and in some provinces there was a negative correlation. The national averages are shown in Table 3-J.

Table 3-J. Nine reasons for studying French.
Comparison of listening test scores
of positive and negative respondents.

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Positive Response (%)</u>	<u>Listening Test Scores</u>	
		<u>Positive Respondents</u>	<u>Negative Respondents</u>
1. To travel abroad (f)	73%	37.5	32.0
2. Duty as Canadians (h)	67	37.8	32.1
3. To travel in Quebec (g)	66	37.3	33.2
4. To use French mass media (d)	59	39.3	31.3
5. To read French literature (e)	54	39.5	31.8
6. Needed for university degree (i)	54	<u>29.4</u>	<u>43.1</u>
7. Useful for work (f)	52	36.1	35.4
8. To speak with French friends (c)	34	41.4	33.1
9. Essential for work (a)	16	43.7	34.5

It will be noted that the widest discrepancy in scores between positive and negative respondents occurs in connection with reason (i) - French credits required for a university degree. This is the less surprising when it is considered that this reason would probably be selected by a certain number of candidates whose interest in French did not extend beyond recognition of the need to overcome an academic obstacle placed in their path by the university authorities. The LT scores by provinces of the candidates who identified positively or negatively with reason (i) are shown in Table 3-K.

Table 3-K. French credits required for a university degree. Average listening test scores of candidates who identified positively or negatively with this reason.

	B.C.	Alta.	Sask.	Man.	Ont.	Que.	N.B.	N.S.	Nfld.
-	33.9	35.8	30.4	37.4	51.9	61.1	29.0	27.1	24.8
+	26.6	31.4	25.5	31.3	38.5	53.6	26.7	24.6	22.7
Diff.	7.3	4.4	4.9	6.1	13.4	7.5	2.3	2.5	2.1

It will be noted that, without exception, the scores of negative respondents are higher than those of positive respondents. The difference in Ontario is quite marked, but in the Maritimes it is slight. The other provinces lie in between.

Question 21. Of the nine reasons for studying French listed in the previous question and identified by the letters (a) to (i), which ONE do you consider to be the most important?

In Table 3-L the nine reasons are ranked numerically according to the number of votes each received from all listening test candidates, regardless of province. This support is shown as a

percentage of the total number of candidates. A comparison is also made of the mean LT scores of the groups who identified with each reason.

Table 3-L. Most important reason for studying French.
Percentage distribution of listening test
candidates supporting each of the nine
reasons, with related listening scores.

Reason	Numerical Ranking - All Canada								
	1 (i)	2 (h)	3 (b)	4 (f)	5 (a)	6 (c)	7 (d)	8 (e)	9 (g)
Percentage of LT Candidates	29	22	14	13	10	3	3	3	3
Average LT Scores	27.0	39.6	36.9	36.8	44.9	41.7	36.3	45.1	36.0

Occupying the first five positions and accounting for 88% of the returns we note the following choices in order of popularity: needed for university credit, duty as a Canadian, useful for work, to travel abroad, and essential for work. It is rather curious, perhaps, that we have the most realistic or strictly utilitarian reason in first place and a moral or patriotic reason not too far behind in second place. (The contrast recalls William James' division of human nature into the tough-minded and the tender-minded.)

Of the remaining four reasons, which shared only 12% of the popular vote, three involve a certain measure of psychological identification with French Canada: to speak with French friends, to use French mass media, and to travel in Quebec. The scant

support these choices received is perhaps an indication that the desire for such integration is not a major factor in the thinking of our university freshmen.

Looking now at the average LT scores along the bottom line of the chart one is immediately struck by the relatively low score of 27% associated with the leading reason (i) - French credits required for a university degree. Further interesting information is obtained when we examine the situation at the provincial level.

Table 3-M. Most important reason for studying French. Listening test scores of candidates who chose reason (i) - French credits required for a university degree - compared with provincial listening test averages.

	No. of Subjects Selecting (i)	% of Provincial Sample	LT Scores Related to Reason (i)	Provincial LT Scores
B.C.	226	35	25.5	29.6
Alta.	38	19	31.8	34.3
Sask.	217	57	25.6	26.2
Man.	44	17	31.1	35.6
Ont.	149	17	33.3	46.8
Que.	18	7	48.3	58.6
N.B.	30	26	23.0	27.8
N.S.	99	45	23.6	25.0
Nfld.	132	44	22.6	22.9

Looking first at the percentage of candidates from each province who selected reason (i), we observe that the five highest provinces in this regard (Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, British Columbia, and New Brunswick) are the five lowest with respect to provincial listening test averages. In the remaining four provinces - Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec - support for reason (i) is considerably less, but in all cases those candidates who do support it obtain scores below the provincial averages.

Because of the defects of the sample we must refrain from using these figures as a basis for comparing attitudes between the provinces. In some provincial universities the samples were drawn from volunteers for French instruction. In others, the candidates had a second language foisted upon them whether they wished it or not. It is scarcely surprising that such different groups should react differently to the matter of university credits in French. The only conclusion that is warranted by our figures is that the candidates - regardless of province - who rejected reason (i) as the main reason for studying French made higher marks than those who selected it.

Question 22. Which of the following statements best describe your feelings about studying French in College?

- (a) I'm genuinely interested in studying French and would choose to study it even if I had a completely free choice in the matter.

- (b) I'm mildly interested in studying French, but I might not register for it if I didn't need language credits to get a degree.
- (c) Frankly, I'm not at all interested in studying French, and I definitely wouldn't register for it if I didn't have to.

In Table 3-N, the national averages show that the majority of candidates (53%) indicated that they had a genuine interest in learning college French. An additional 39% revealed a mild interest, and the small residue of 8% said that they had no interest at all. Those candidates who claimed a real interest scored appreciably higher marks on the listening test than those who admitted only a mild interest bound up with the need for obtaining language credits (42.2% vs. 29.3%). Those with avowedly no interest averaged only 25.9%. These national averages, however, cover wide differences in provincial scores. Further, the figure of 42.2% for the group with genuine interest is unduly weighted by the high scores of the 780 candidates from Ontario and Quebec, 46% of the sample. The figures for each province sometimes show marked differences in scores between the three groups (British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec), but in other cases the differences are slight (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland). Where the samples are very small, results sometimes run counter to the general trend.

**Table 3-N. Attitudes towards the study of French
in college related to listening test
scores.**

	<u>Genuine Interest</u>			<u>Mild Interest</u>			<u>No Interest At All</u>		
	<u>No. of subjects</u>	<u>% of provincial sample</u>	<u>LT score</u>	<u>No. of subjects</u>	<u>% of provincial sample</u>	<u>LT score</u>	<u>No. of subjects</u>	<u>% of provincial sample</u>	<u>LT score</u>
B.C.	256	40	34.5	312	48	27.1	79	12	23.9
Alta.	138	70	36.3	48	24	29.4	12	6	32.5
Sask.	108	29	27.5	198	53	25.5	67	18	26.8
Man.	180	69	37.9	68	26	31.5	12	5	25.8
Ont.	599	68	51.9	259	29	37.0	29	3	29.1
Que.	181	76	61.2	53	22	52.2	5	2	53.0
N.B.	62	53	28.9	49	42	26.0	5	5	33.0
N.S.	72	33	25.8	122	56	25.3	24	11	20.8
Nfld.	115	38	24.3	167	55	22.2	24	7	21.2
Totals	1711			1276			257		
Averages		53	42.2		39	29.3		8	25.9

In summary, our survey of the reasons offered by candidates for studying French appears to lend support to the view advanced by Lambert and others that high achievement in second language learning is related to positive attitudes towards the target language. In question 20, those respondents who identified positively with the first eight reasons for studying French generally made higher marks than those who responded negatively. In question 21, those who supported the purely utilitarian or expedient reason of obtaining university credits as the main incentive for studying French scored the lowest marks. In the

replies to question 22, candidates who indicated little or no interest in learning French obtained appreciably lower scores than those who professed a genuine interest in studying the language.

3.11 Size of Community and Achievement

Question 23. List the names of all schools you have attended.

By providing information as to where the candidate had received his schooling - whether in large urban and/or other communities, and in what province or provinces - this question served a number of purposes. The data obtained was used, for example, in selecting the Basic Group, i.e. the candidates of English-speaking background who had received their entire education in their home provinces. It was also intended to be used to determine the effect on a student's achievement in French of moving from one provincial system of education to another. For this particular purpose, it was decided to simplify the tabulation by limiting the sample to those students who had completed Grades 7, 8, 9 in one province before moving on to a different province where they finished their high school education. Unfortunately, the compilation for these grade levels produced a very small number of cases, too small to permit valid inferences.

Yet another tabulation was made in which the Basic Group respondents were classified into two sub-groups according to the size of the communities in which they had been educated. The "Big City" group consisted of those candidates who had received at least 80% of their education in one of the following major

Canadian cities:- Vancouver, Victoria; Edmonton, Calgary; Saskatoon, Regina; Winnipeg; Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Windsor, London, Kitchener, Sudbury; Montreal; Saint John; Halifax; St. John's

The "Other" group consisted of all the remaining candidates, that is, those educated in communities other than those listed above.

Table 3-0 below shows the distribution of candidates by provinces between the eighteen major cities already mentioned and the smaller communities. For simplicity the figures are given for LT candidates only. The corresponding percentage figures for RT candidates in each province were almost identical - within one or two per cent.

Table 3-0. Distribution of listening test candidates between eighteen major cities and smaller communities. Nine provinces.

	Major Cities		Smaller Communities	
	n	%	n	%
B.C.	349	53	314	47
Alta.	115	56	90	44
Sask.	140	36	244	64
Man.	151	56	120	44
Ont.	365	41	536	59
Que.	152	60	103	40
N.B.	16	14	100	35
N.S.	38	17	185	83
Nfld.	83	27	224	7.
Total	1,409		1,916	
Averages		<u>42%</u>		<u>58%</u>

It will be noted that in all provinces except New Brunswick, and perhaps Nova Scotia, there was a sufficient number of candidates in each of the two groups to permit valid comparisons with respect to the achievement of the two groups. Table 3-P shows the differences in performance in both the listening and the reading tests:

Table 3-P. Comparison of test scores between candidates educated in eighteen major cities and those educated in smaller communities.

Note: Column (1) shows provincial averages.

Column (2) shows the averages for major cities.

Column (3) shows the averages for smaller communities.

Column (4) shows the difference between (2) and (3).

Listening Test				Province	Reading Test			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
29.6	31.2	27.6	3.6	B.C.	35.4	36.8	33.7	3.1
34.3	36.7	31.3	5.4	Alta.	37.5	37.2	37.9	-.7
26.2	29.1	24.6	4.5	Sask.	41.0	41.5	40.8	.7
35.6	37.1	33.7	3.4	Man.	49.3	48.4	50.5	-2.1
46.8	50.5	44.3	6.2	Ont.	58.9	60.3	57.9	2.4
58.6	57.3	60.6	-3.3	Que.	52.5	52.2	53.1	-.9
27.8	23.8	28.5	-4.7	N.B.	31.2	36.0	30.5	5.5
25.0	26.6	24.6	2.0	N.S.	33.2	35.5	32.7	2.8
22.9	24.3	22.4	1.9	Nfld.	30.0	30.0	30.0	0
<u>National</u>								
<u>35.8</u>	<u>39.3</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>6.0</u>	Averages	<u>45.9</u>	<u>48.0</u>	<u>44.2</u>	<u>3.8</u>

Reviewing first the listening test scores, the following facts come to light:

- (a) In all cases except Quebec and New Brunswick, the big city scores (2) are higher than the provincial averages (1), and also higher than the scores for smaller communities (3). The apparent anomaly of New Brunswick and Quebec finds a plausible explanation in the fact that students living outside of Montreal and Saint John generally have more out of school contacts with French, whether they seek them or not, and this exposure probably aids auditory comprehension. At any rate, there were only sixteen candidates from St. John (Table 3-0).
- (b) The differential between the scores in major cities and those in the smaller communities was only about 2% in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. In the remaining provinces it varied between 3.3 and 6.2%. Although these differences were far from spectacular, they perhaps provide some evidence of extra attention to oral-aural skills in the schools of the major cities.

As compared with the listening test scores, the differences between the three sets of reading test scores were generally smaller. (The New Brunswick differential of 5.5, this time in favour of the sixteen Saint John candidates, was an exception.) One might perhaps expect that the schools outside the major cities - usually less well equipped and with a higher proportion of generalist staff - would not be at the same disadvantage in

the teaching of a traditional skill like reading as they would be in the presentation of audio-lingual instruction. But the slight differences noted above provide insufficient support for this hypothesis.

3.12 Sex and Age Factors in Achievement

Although these two items did not appear on the questionnaire, candidates were required to enter them on their answer sheets.

Sex. With respect to sex it was hypothesized that girls, being generally considered the more studious of the species, would do better on the tests than boys. The extent to which this hypothesis was borne out is shown in the following table.

Table 3-Q. Relationship between sex and achievement.
A comparison of male and female listening
and reading test scores.

Listening Test						Reading Test					
<u>Females</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Province</u>		<u>Females</u>		<u>Males</u>			
<u>no.</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>no.</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>diff.</u>		<u>no.</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>no.</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>diff.</u>	
289	31.4	368	28.2	3.2	B.C.	342	39.3	406	32.0	7.3	
116	34.5	86	33.8	0.7	Alta.	118	38.6	86	35.9	2.7	
175	26.4	202	26.2	0.2	Sask.	205	44.0	247	38.7	5.3	
156	35.9	109	35.2	0.7	Man.	160	52.6	128	45.7	6.9	
535	49.4	355	42.9	6.5	Ont.	734	64.2	736	53.8	10.4	
104	61.1	146	57.0	4.1	Que.	250	56.6	293	49.0	7.6	
51	29.5	60	26.7	2.8	N.B.	62	36.0	94	28.7	7.3	
94	25.0	126	24.9	0.1	N.S.	95	36.3	133	31.0	5.3	
101	24.0	201	22.3	1.7	Nfld.	141	34.1	267	27.9	6.2	
1621		1653			Totals	2107		2390			
	38.4		33.3	5.1	Averages		50.8		41.7	9.1	

It will be noted that the fifth column under each test gives the differences between the male and female scores. In the listening test, although the girls are superior in every province, the margin is under one per cent in four provinces, and between 1.7 and 4.1% in four others. Ontario shows the most marked difference - 6.5%

The reading test scores also establish the superiority of the girls in all provinces; but here the differences are greater, in most provinces being between 5 and 7½ per cent.

If we accept the assumption that girls are more studious than boys, we have a possible explanation of why they surpassed the boys to a greater extent on the reading test than on the listening test. Being more studious - spending more time on the books! - they developed better reading skills. In the listening phase of instruction, however, since take home records or tapes are still not widely used in Canada, they had less opportunity to "bone up".

It will be observed that there was a rather remarkable balance between the number of male and female students in the Basic Group. In the listening test there were 1621 females and 1653 males, nearly a 50-50 distribution. In the reading test the females numbered 2,107 (47% of the total) as against 2,390 males.

Age. With respect to age there was some evidence, though it was not conclusive, that with equal years of training in French younger candidates make higher scores than older candidates. One difficulty was the lack of sufficient data for all provinces outside of the typical training sequences. Further, many candidates failed to report their ages on the answer sheet. However, a statistically significant number of cases for ages 17, 18, and 19 was obtained in four provinces as follows:

<u>Province</u>	<u>Years of Training</u>
Ontario	5
Quebec	9
British Columbia	4
Saskatchewan	4

Table 3-R shows the relationship between test scores and age within each of these provinces for the training sequences shown above. No comparison, of course, between the provinces is intended.

Table 3-R. Relationship between age and achievement.
Comparison of test scores of candidates
at the 17, 18, and 19 year levels - Four provinces.

Listening Test				Prov.	Reading Test							
<u>Age 17</u>	<u>Age 18</u>	<u>Age 19</u>	<u>n</u>		<u>Age 17</u>	<u>Age 18</u>	<u>Age 19</u>	<u>n</u>				
<u>n</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>n</u>				
56	57	309	52	197	46	Ont. (5 yrs)	95	70	413	65	305	59
59	58	30	55	13	54	Que. (9 yrs)	164	55	46	47	18	46
46	37	63	33	22	28	B.C. (4 yrs)	55	47	91	45	25	36
69	27	158	27	25	23	Sask. (4 yrs)	84	43	191	42	24	36

In both tests there is a fall in scores as we move up the age scale. (The 17-18 interval in Saskatchewan is the single exception.) If we compare the scores for age 17 with those for age 19, we have appreciable differences. In reading the differential is 11% in Ontario and British Columbia, 9% in Quebec, and 7% in Saskatchewan.

3.13 Summary of Findings

For convenience, the main results of the survey of language background are summed up below. It will be noted that items 1, 2, and 12 refer to both the Basic and Residual Groups. The remaining items refer to the the Basic Group only.

- (1) Students with one or both parents of French background made appreciably higher scores on the tests than those of English background (Basic Group).
- (2) Students with both parents of ethnic background other than English or French did not reveal any significant superiority over the Basic Group, or vice versa.
- (3) Nearly one third of the candidates stated that they were not proficient enough in French to carry on a conversation, to write a letter to a friend, or to read a newspaper. The scores of these candidates were generally lower than those who stated that they had the requisite skills.

- (4) Students who said that they had studied or were able to speak, read, or write two or more modern languages in addition to English made above average scores.
- (5) The correlation between the length of the training sequence and test scores though usually positive was not always so. The explanation probably lies in variations in the amount of training received at the elementary and high school levels, as well as in the quality and type of training.
- (6) In Ontario and Quebec two-thirds of the candidates reported that they had received at least some of their training from a teacher who taught mainly in French. In most of the other provinces less than one quarter of the candidates reported that they had had such a teacher. This difference in the amount of French heard in the classroom explains at least in part why listening scores were higher in the two Central provinces.
- (7) About 12% of the candidates stated that their schools had language laboratories, though there appears to have been some confusion over the meaning of the term. No clear relationship emerged between test scores and use of a laboratory, probably because of insufficient data.

- (8) There was close correlation between school marks in French as reported by the candidates and MLA test scores; i.e., both criteria graded the provincial samples similarly.
- (9) About 20% of the candidates indicated that they did better in French than in their other school subjects, and 37% said that they did worse. The nature of the sample was no doubt a factor here, with variations in the number volunteers in the various provincial groups.
- (10) Three quarters or more of the candidates stated that they had no French friends. Nearly all those who had such friends said that they seldom or ever spoke French with them.
- (11) Very few students outside of Quebec made use of French T.V., radio, or periodicals to improve their French.
- (12) There was no appreciable effect on test scores of visits to French-speaking communities. (The duration of the visits was not specified.) A positive effect on achievement was indicated, however, where candidates had lived in a partially French environment.

- (13) Candidates who identified themselves with a number of reasons usually advanced for studying French generally made higher scores than those who rejected these reasons. But the differences were sometimes slight and negative correlations appeared in some cases.
- (14) Candidates who selected as the main reason for studying French the need for satisfying a language requirement for university graduation made appreciably lower scores than those who selected from other less expedient reasons for language study.
- (15) Candidates who indicated a genuine interest in learning French made significantly higher scores than those who professed little or no interest.
- (16) Candidates educated in eighteen major cities usually exceeded provincial averages for listening by a few percentage points, but there was no clear pattern of superiority for reading. Candidates outside of Montreal, however, perhaps because of greater exposure to French, outscored the students from the metropolis.
- (17) Girls made better scores than boys in all provinces in both tests. In reading the difference was about 6% in most provinces, but in listening the differences were usually very slight. It is suggested that the girls - usually considered more

studious than boys - were unable to improve their listening skills to the same extent as their reading skills through home study.

- (18) There was an almost equal number of males and females in the Basic Group.
- (19) There was some evidence, but probably insufficient to be conclusive, that with equal years of training younger candidates did better than older candidates in both tests.

4. CONCLUSION

In the course of this study we have had a number of indications pointing to the need for caution in the interpretation of the results of both the tests and the questionnaire. With regard to the tests we have had some reason to doubt the validity of the American fourth year norms as a yardstick for measuring the achievement of Canadian students. These norms, it will be recalled, were based on the scores of a rather small and rather special group of students who had volunteered for four years of French instruction.

We have also seen that our sample was not a random one and hence did not represent the whole population of high school graduates who had completed matriculation French. Again, the nine provincial groups were not homogeneous either with respect to years of training or with respect to motivation, some being volunteers for college French and others having this requirement thrust upon them.

Because of these defects in the sample it is not possible to use the test results (as originally intended) as a basis for a judgment on the relative efficiency of language instruction in the schools of the various provinces. It is possible, however, to express on the basis of the results a general judgment about the state of language instruction in Canada. As we have seen, although all candidates had satisfied the matriculation requirement in French for their respective provinces, the provincial test averages were below the American third year

norms in seven provinces in the listening test and in five provinces in the reading test. It should also be recalled that the fourth year norms, were exceeded only by Ontario fifth year students in reading and by Quebec students with eight or nine years of training in listening. Unless one is prepared to argue that only our worst students find their way to university, these results can only be assessed as mediocre to unsatisfactory. They will cause no surprise to those engaged in language teaching, who know well how little real contact there is with the living language both inside and outside the classroom. A similar judgment has been expressed by the students in our sample through their answers to the relevant questions in the questionnaire.

It has often been said that a greater measure of bilingualism could do much to promote national unity in Canada. Unfortunately, the low marks obtained in the MLA tests in reading and listening indicate that even on the relatively simple planes of aural and visual comprehension second language programmes in French across Canada are not producing bilingual students. We may infer with reasonable certainty that proficiency is even less adequate in the more difficult skills of speaking and writing. Sadie M. Boyles of the University of British Columbia sums up well the disappointing results achieved in our language classes:

"We didn't learn to speak it. This is the almost universal plaint, and it points up one of the serious weaknesses in our language programme in Canada. There is too little French, it comes too late and it is too frequently text book learning. In many classrooms still, oral practice is sacrificed to grammar analysis, conning of vocabulary lists, and translation. French is not approached as a spoken language; it is not used to communicate; it is not regarded as a bridge to

another culture. As a consequence "high school French" is generally a term of derision. Sometimes it almost seems as if English Canadians expected their French to be inadequate, accepted the fact, and refused to do anything about it beyond complaining that somewhere along the line they had been cheated and had not been taught to speak it. What can be done about it is a question that should concern all thinking people in Canada to-day." 29

29. Sadie M. Boyles, "The Teaching of French in Canadian Schools", Journal of Education, January 1964, pp. 72-76.

Project Outline

Division VI

Project No. 1

Title: Study of French Language Proficiency - University Student Survey.

Method and Content:

Modern Language Association of America French Tests - Form M.A. in reading and listening to be administered to first year students enrolled in French courses in English Canadian universities, accompanied by questionnaire on language background.

Objective:

To appraise effectiveness of French instruction in schools and assess factors affecting achievement.

Participating Universities

Acadia	Queen's
Alberta	St. Francis-Xavier
Calgary	Saskatchewan
Edmonton	Saskatoon
Bishop's	Regina
Brandon	Sir George Williams
British Columbia	Toronto
Carleton	St. Michael's
Dalhousie	Trinity
Laurentian	University College
Manitoba	Victoria College
McGill	Victoria
Memorial	Western Ontario
New Brunswick	Windsor

Questionnaire

1. In what country were you born?

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| A. Canada | E. Germany |
| B. United Kingdom | F. Italy |
| C. United States | G. Other |
| D. France | |

2. What was your father's native language?

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| A. English | D. Italian |
| B. French | E. Ukrainian |
| C. German | F. Other |

3. What was your mother's native language?

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| A. English | D. Italian |
| B. French | E. Ukrainian |
| C. German | F. Other |

4. What is the chief language spoken in your home?

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| A. English | D. Italian |
| B. French | E. Ukrainian |
| C. German | F. Other |

5. Do you speak any language other than English ... well enough to carry on a conversation?

Yes No

If Yes: which one(s)?

- | |
|--------------|
| A. French |
| B. German |
| C. Italian |
| D. Ukrainian |
| E. Others |

6. Do you write any language other than English ... well enough to compose a letter to a friend?

Yes No

If Yes: which one(s)?

- | |
|--------------|
| A. French |
| B. German |
| C. Italian |
| D. Ukrainian |
| E. Others |

7. How about reading? Are there any languages other than English that you can read well enough to understand a newspaper?

Yes No

If Yes: Which one(s)?

- A. French
- B. German
- C. Italian
- D. Ukrainian
- E. Others

8. Have you studied any languages other than English or French at school?

Yes No

If Yes: Which one(s)?

- A. German
- B. Italian
- C. Ukrainian
- D. Latin
- E. Others

9. In which grades did you study French in school?
Make a mark in the appropriate box for each grade.

- A. Studied French
- B. Did not study French
- C. I can't remember

10. Thinking back over each year that you studied French in school, did you ever have a teacher who spoke only or primarily French in class?

A. Yes B. No C. Can't remember?

If Yes: Indicate what grades on
the answer sheet.

11. Did you ever have a French teacher whose native language was French?

A. Yes B. No C. I don't know

If Yes: Indicate what grades on
the answer sheet.

12. Was there a language laboratory in the last school you attended?

- A. Yes B. No C. I don't know

If Yes: About how many hours a month did you use the language lab during your last year in French.

- A. Not at all
B. About 1 hour
C. About 2 hours
D. About 3 hours
E. More than 3 hours

13. What was your final mark in your last year of French?

- A. 80 - 100%
B. 70 - 79%
C. 60 - 69%
D. 50 - 59%
E. Below 50%

14. How did your mark in French compare with your other grades that year?

- A. Better than most
B. About the same as most
C. Not as good as most

15. Did you have any French-speaking friends before coming to college?

Yes No

If Yes: On the average, how often did you speak French with them?

- A. Never
B. Occasionally, but usually not
C. About half the time
D. Most of the time but not always
E. Always

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16. About how often do you watch French-language programmes on television?

- A. Never
- B. Less than once a month
- C. 1-3 times a month
- D. About once a week
- E. More than once a week

17. About how often do you listen to French-language programmes on the radio?

- A. Never
- B. Less than once a month
- C. 1-3 times a month
- D. About once a week
- E. More than once a week

18. How often do you read French newspapers or magazines?

- A. Never
- B. Less than once a month
- C. 1-3 times a month
- D. Once a week
- E. More than once a week

19. Have you ever lived in a city, town or community where French was spoken by more than 1/3 of the people?

Yes No

If No: Have you ever visited a community where French was spoken by more than 1/3 of the people?

Yes No

20. Studies have shown that people have quite different reasons for studying French. Please mark whether each of the following reasons would probably apply to you, or probably not apply.

WOULD APPLY WOULD NOT
TO ME APPLY TO ME

(a) A knowledge of French is
absolutely essential in
the line of work I hope
to enter

(A)

(B)

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	WOULD APPLY TO ME	WOULD NOT APPLY TO ME
(b) Although not essential French would be a definite asset in the line of work I expect to enter	(A)	(B)
(c) I would like to be able to speak French with my French-speaking friends	(A)	(B)
(d) I would like to be able to read French newspapers and follow French-language radio and television programmes...	(A)	(B)
(e) I would like to be able to read French literature	(A)	(B)
(f) I would like to know French in order to travel abroad ..	(A)	(B)
(g) I would like to know French in order to travel in French Canada	(A)	(B)
(h) As a Canadian resident, I feel I should be able to speak French	(A)	(B)
(i) One of the main reasons I'm taking French is that I need language credits in order to get a degree	(A)	(B)
21. Which of the reasons that you checked above do you consider to be the most important? (Mark one of the following).	a b c d e f g h i	
22. Finally, which of the following statements best describes your feelings about studying French in College?		
A. I'm genuinely interested in studying French, and would choose to study it even if I had a completely free choice in the matter.		

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- B. I'm mildly interested in studying French, but I might not register for it if I didn't need language credits to get a degree.
 - C. Frankly, I'm not at all interested in studying French, and I definitely wouldn't register for it if I didn't have to.
23. Please list the names and locations of all schools you have ever attended - beginning with the first grade in elementary school - and enter the grades and years that you attended each one.

